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THE MADERA COUNTY HISTORIAN

MADERA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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INTRODUCTION TO THE MACE DIARY

by

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A recent acquisition of Madera County Historical Society is a diary kept by Captain Russell Perry Mace during 1860, fortunately preserved by the family of his brother-in-law, John Cunningham. Folded between the leaves was a small buckskin bag, called a poke, used by the placer miner to hold gold dust.

Born in Boston in 1820, Russell left home as a cabin boy on a ship bound for New Orleans. For a season he and a friend became assistants to a French trader in the Comanche country, after which, at Independence, Missouri, he joined a wagon train of the American Fur Company en route to Bent's Fort, a post on the Santa Fe trail at the Arkansas River. For six years he was employed by the Bent Brothers as express rider and buffalo hunter.

In 1844 he returned to New Orleans, working as a clerk for a wholesale wine dealer until the Mexican War broke out. Among the first to volunteer, he served for three months under General Gaines. Louisiana was called upon for a regiment. Mace was ordered to New Orleans to recruit Company "A", First Regiment, Louisiana Volunteers. He was appointed Captain and served throughout the war.

Back in New Orleans when peace was declared, he married Elizabeth Ann Evans, the widow of First Lieutenant Evans of his company who had died of yellow fever at Tampico. With his bride and her seven-year-old son, Charles Evans, he left for California, arriving in San Francisco on the steamer "PANAMA" in August, 1849.

For a few weeks they visited Dr. Hitchcock, Company "A" surgeon during the war, in Happy Valley and then the family settled at Rose's Bar on the Yuba River where Captain Mace became a placer miner, an occupation he followed for twenty years, varied however by public office and livestock raising.

From the Yuba the Maces moved to Sonora, Tuolumne County. In September of 1853 he was on the election board at the Stevenson ranch on the Merced River then in Mariposa County. Again in 1856 the Captain was on an election board, this time at Fine Gold Gulch precinct in newly formed Fresno County.

It was in 1855 that Charles Evans left home to seek adventure. He joined the filibustering expedition to Sonora, Mexico led by the Stockton lawyer, Henry A. Crabb. Charles was fourteen years old when the expedition met its tragic end, and was the sole survivor, being spared because of his youth.

Again in 1856 the assessor of Fresno County listed Mace, Hatch and Company engaged in building a canal to take the San Joaquin River out of its regular course in order to work the "diggins" below. This operation was at Clark's Bar, twenty miles up-river from Millerton, the county seat.

In 1857, Mace was elected Justice of the Peace and in 1859 Elizabeth Ann registered a cattle brand in Millerton, giving her address as Clark's Bar. As there was no income involved in the diversion scheme, it was necessary for the company to join forces in other

ways to make their living expenses. It was just such an endeavor that the diary describes.

Therefore, in 1860 we find the Maces settled in a new location at Fine Gold Gulch near the San Joaquin River, their home not quite completed, as on November 17th he mentions putting the roof on his house.

Charles Evans, now 18, came home to see his parents and adopted the mining profession.

The Captain worked alone during the months of July and August using a "rocker," a device suitable for separating gold from "dirt" where a single miner is involved. Everyday necessities were purchased at James Urquhart's store nearby on the river or at Temperance Flat settlement a short distance up-river.

Mining on the San Joaquin River during the months of July and August involved daytime temperatures well up in the 90's and occasionally up to 105° or 110°.

His neighbor and partner, James McCardle paid him a visit during July, leaving for Mariposa, possibly on company business. McCardle lived on Willow Creek, the west fork of Fine Gold, about six miles north of Millerton.

The last of July and the first of August the company began to assemble, Jerry Ridgway and Charley Duke on the 27th and Cogswell on the 31st.

The Maces appear to have been boarding the rest of the members of the company judging from the amount of food purchased. During August, while waiting for the flow of the river to decrease, the necessary equipment was assembled for the joint effort, which began on September 3rd.

On the 2nd Elizabeth Ann paid a visit to Mrs. Lewis. This was Mrs. James H. Lewis whose husband was an "herb" doctor. On page 39 of Winchell's History it is stated that Lewis arrived on the San Joaquin in the late fall of 1852 and soon located with his wife and several sons and daughters on Fine Gold Gulch, buying the Malcolm and Shepard store. She was the only white woman in the area until the J. W. Gilmores arrived in 1855.

The diary mentions the Gilmores calling on the Maces on the evening of November 5th. On page 48 of Volume A, Supervisor's Minutes of Mariposa County, the polling place for the fall election of 1853 for precinct 35 on Coarse Gold Gulch is given as Gilmore's. Likewise on page 68 for the election of 1854, Gilmore's is the polling place; in 1855 no mention of Gilmore. The 1850 census of San Joaquin County lists John Gilmore, 29 years of age, occupation wheelwright, place of birth, Ireland. No mention of J. W. Gilmore being in California before 1855 has appeared in the Fresno County histories or in the family documents, but on the other hand they do not say that he wasn't an early arrival who went back to find a bride.

Mrs. Mace died in 1864, Mr. Gilmore at about the same time. And the Captain and Jennie Cunningham Gilmore were married in 1866. By this marriage Mace acquired a step-daughter, Matilda Ann Gilmore, and two sons and two daughters. From 1866 to 1874 they lived at the Gilmore home at what is now O'Neals. In 1874 they leased a hotel in Borden and in 1876 removed to Madera at its very beginnings and built and operated the Yosemite Hotel for many years.

Charles Evans also became a hotel proprietor after mining in California and Nevada for a decade. When the city of Merced was founded by the railroad he built a hotel facing the tracks. Ill health caused him to retire when the building burned down in the middle eighties. He died in 1889.

During the first half of September, 1860, the company built a dam across the river above the bar to be worked. This kept out the water and also raised its level so that a water wheel could be used to operate a pump which removed the seepage water from the "diggins" or hole where the gold-bearing dirt and gravel were obtained from the river bed. Water was also needed to flow through sluice boxes, called a "Long Tom," in which the gold was separated from the gravel and caught in riffles

INTRODUCTION TO THE MACE DIARY (cont.)

arranged in the bottom of the boxes.

On September 17th all was in readiness and "washing" commenced which meant shoveling the pay dirt from the "diggins" into the sluice boxes. After washing, a "clean up" was necessary which involved gathering the contents of the riffles and carefully separating the gold from the black sand, a heavy iron oxide which was invariably present. The work continued until the winter rains started on December 15th when the river rose, running over the dam and ending the season.

Adding the dividends declared indicates that the gold obtained amounted to $4,213.82 which gave the members who worked steadily about $35.00 per week for fifteen weeks.

Work was interrupted on November 6th by the general election which all hands attended. This was Lincoln's first term and what happened that day at the Fine Gold precinct became a famous episode in the county history. The county voted solidly Democratic except for the "Lone Republican," William Aldrich, who had acquired his fame by casting the only vote for Fremont in the election of 1856. A couple of rabid Democrats and very undesirable citizens threatened to prevent the so-called Abolitionist from voting. When it became known that trouble was imminent Captain Mace, James McCardle and William Cunningham put on their arms and escorted Aldrich to the polls, permitting the Republican with whom they disagreed to vote in peace.

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Jerry Ridgway, in 1866, killed a man near Centerville. After several escapes and arrests he was finally tried and acquitted but only to die a violent death later in Arizona.

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BASIC PLACER MINING, a description of placer mining, can be obtained from California Division of Mines and Geology, Ferry Building, San Francisco 11, California.

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PLACER MINING ON THE SAN JOAQUIN RIVER
THE DIARY OF CAPTAIN R. P. MACE
Millerton, Fresno County, California

July 1st Sunday 1860
I have kept no diary since I was in Millerton, have done very little work last month and only made about $8.00

2nd Monday
I washed 166 buckets of dirt & made $8.37

3rd Tuesday
I washed 120 buckets dirt & made $3.10
Charley came home today.

4th Wednesday
I was stripping sand a part of the day.

5th Thursday
I washed 80 buckets of dirt & made $1.25
Charley left today.

6th Friday
I was prospecting today, found diggins in front of Urquharts.

7th Saturday
I washed 66 buckets dirt & made $1.30

8th Sunday
I was at home all day. Ragland arrived with vegetables, paid him Five Dollars & sixteen cts for same.

9th Monday
I washed 142 buckets dirt & made $2.37

10th Tuesday
I washed 112 buckets dirt & made $1.62

11th Wednesday
It rained very hard last night, the river was very high this morning. I was stripping today.

12th Thursday
I was getting wood today.

13th Friday
I washed 108 buckets dirt & made $1.45

14th Saturday
I washed 34 buckets dirt in the forenoon and made .62½
In the afternoon went to Urquhart's, got sack of flour and 12 lbs. pork & $1.00 worth soap, paid him for the same $8.00. Jas. McCardle came this afternoon with beef 16 lbs.

16th Monday
McCardle left this morning for Mariposa. I moved the rocker up from below and was stripping sand around the point.

DIARY OF CAPTAIN R. P. MACE (Continued)

July 17th Tuesday
I moved the balance of the tools up from below & stripped some.

18th Wednesday
I was stripping sand.

19th Thursday $2.00

20th Friday
I washed 100 buckets dirt & made $1.62

21st Saturday .87½

22nd Sunday
I was at home all day.

23rd Monday
I was prospecting today. Found nothing.

24th Tuesday
I went on the Island prospecting.

25th Wednesday
I pounded out some quartz, made $4.37

26th Thursday
Moved my rocker and tools home. I washed 100 buckets dirt & made .70

27th Friday
I washed 50 buckets dirt in the forenoon. Made .60
Jerry and Duke arrived at noon.

28th Saturday
I went to the Flat purchased 12 lbs. pork, paid for it. In afternoon started for Fine Gold Gulch. Fought fire all afternoon.

29th Sunday
I was fighting fire all day.

30th Monday
I was putting brush on the shed.

31st Tuesday
I went to look for the cattle, brought home 12 lbs. beef. Cogswell arrived today.

August 1st Wednesday
Done nothing today.

2nd Thursday
Took pills last night was sick. In forenoon wrote letter to Charley.

3rd Friday
I washed 75 buckets dirt & made .75
Paid Lewis $6.30 for vegetables.

4th Saturday
I washed 100 buckets dirt & made .85

August 5th Sunday
I went to the Flat, purchased 12 lbs. pork and paid for it $3.00.

6th Monday
I was writing a letter and prospecting today.

10th Friday
I have only made $3.25 since last Monday.

11th Saturday
I was fixing a brush shed today. The first beef came today also vegts.

15th Wednesday
I have done no work since the 11th. I was at miners meeting today.

19th Sunday
I have done nothing since 15th but cut a little wood

20th & 21st Monday & Tuesday
Done no work today

22nd & 23rd Wednesday & Thursday
I was getting fire wood.

24th Friday
Charley Duke went to town for Compy. I was hunting cattle.

27th Monday
I attended primary election at Temperance. McCardle & Thornton elected delegates.

28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, No work.

Sept. 1st Saturday
I went to the Flat and brought up a wheelbarrow.

2nd Sunday
My wife went over to see Mrs. Lewis today.

3rd Monday
The Company commenced work on the dam. Duke, McCardle, Cunningham, Ridgway and myself worked today.

4th Tuesday
All hands worked today. Farnham went to Fine Gold for a wheelbarrow.

5th Wednesday
All hands worked today except Farnham and Cogswell.

6th Thursday
All hands worked today except Cogswell. He lost half a day.

DIARY OF CAPTAIN R. P. MACE (Continued)

Sept. 7th Friday
All hands worked today. Cogswell burning coal.

8th Saturday
All hands worked today. Cogswell is burning coal. We finished the dam.

9th Sunday
I went over to Willow Creek today.

10th, 11th, 12th, 13th
All hands worked.

14th Friday
All hands worked in the forenoon. No work for all hands in the afternoon, so Farnham, Cogswell and Ridgway worked in the afternoon.

15th Saturday
All hands worked today. We started pump in the morning. At noon dam broke.

16th Sunday
Last night the dam broke again. All hands except Hatch worked in the forenoon mending dam. I tended the pump in afternoon.

17th Monday
All hands worked today. We commenced washing.

18th Tuesday
All hands worked today. We made $53.45

19th Wednesday
All hands worked. We made $52.12

20th Thursday
All hands worked today. Ridgway went to Millerton for canvas. We made $60.00
Charley came home. Only washed half a day. Raised the dam in forenoon.

21st Friday
All hands worked. We made $73.12

22nd Saturday
All hands worked. Cunningham did not work in the afternoon. We made $80.50

23rd Sunday
My wife & myself went to the Flat. Purchased onions & potatoes. No work.

24th Monday
All hands worked half a day. The hose burst last night. The hole was full of water. We washed no dirt today.

25th Tuesday
All hands worked today, McCardle was up nearly all night with the pump.
Charley worked for the Co. We made $61.75

Sept. 26th Wednesday
All hands worked today. The dam broke just as we were quitting work. Made 44.00

27th Thursday
All hands worked today mending the dam. We finished the dam and got the pump running by sundown.

28th Friday
All hands worked today. Farnham & Cunningham tended the pump last night. We made $43.15

29th Saturday
All hands worked. We made $62.00

30th Sunday
I was at home all day. We made a dividend today of $67.00 to the share. I tend the pump tonight.

Oct. 1st Monday
All hands worked today except Ridgway. Charley worked for him. I was in the tail race all day. We made $121.50

2nd Tuesday
All hands worked except Cogswell. Charley worked in his place. We washed in forenoon. In the afternoon the hose bursted. Too much water. We made $56.75

3rd Wednesday
All hands worked. Cogswell went to Millerton for the Compy. I sent $50.00 to Scott Ashman by Cogswell. Charley worked today on Rawson's share. We made $47.87

4th Thursday
All hands worked today except Cogswell. Charley worked the Rawson share. It rained today. We made $109.75

5th Friday
All hands worked in the forenoon but Farnham. Hatch and Charley worked all day. The hose bursted last night. Did not wash today. Rained last night and morning

6th Saturday
The pump stopped last night. The hole full of water. Farnham & Ridgway worked the pump in the forenoon. Chas. Evans & Cogswell worked in the afternoon. Charley's time for Farnham.

7th Sunday
Hole full of water. Duke & Ridgway worked the pump in the forenoon. Mace and Evans worked in the afternoon. Charley's time for Farnham.

DIARY OF CAPTAIN R. P. MACE (continued)

8th Monday
Chas. Evans & Ridgway worked the pump all last night. Ridgway & Cogswell worked this afternoon. All the rest of the company worked all day. We washed half a day & made $108.62

9th Tuesday
All hands worked today. Chas. Evans worked all night last night at the pump for the Co. We made $135.75

10th Wednesday
All hands worked half a day, four in forenoon & four in the afternoon. The sack dam came in. No dirt washed today.

11th Thursday
All hands worked half a day each except Ridgway. He worked all day. We finished the hole above the big boulder. Had a dividend tonight of $73.00 each. We made today $48.00

12th Friday
McCardle and myself went to Millerton today. C. Hatch did not work today. Farnham worked half a day. The rest of the Co. worked all day. C. Evans worked for me, moved up the sluices.

13th Saturday
Jim and myself were in town today. Farnham and Cunningham did not work. All the rest of the Co. worked. C. Evans worked for me.

14th Sunday
No work. I got home from Millerton.

15th Monday
Cunningham did not work in the forenoon. He worked in afternoon. Cogswell worked half a day. He did not work in the afternoon. Evans worked all day for Farnham. The rest worked making dam.

16th Tuesday
McCardle, Duke, Cogswell, Mace & Evans for Farnham worked all day. Hatch & Cunningham worked half a day. Ridgway did not work. He went to Millerton. My bill of provisions arrived today.

17th Wednesday
All hands worked except Ridgway. C. Evans worked for Farnham.

18th Thursday
All hands worked today except Ridgway. C. Evans worked for Farnham. We started washing dirt this evening.

October 19th Friday
All hands worked half a day. C. Evans worked for Farnham. It rained in the afternoon. No work.

20th Saturday
All hands worked today. C. Evans for Farnham. We made $29.00

22nd Monday
All hands worked today. C. Evans worked for Farnham. We made $96.12

23rd Tuesday
All hands worked but myself. C. Evans worked for Farnham. I was hunting cattle. Found them and two young calves. We made $184.00

24th Wednesday
All hands worked today. Evans worked for Farnham. We made $234.50
Rankin was here today. I paid him $50.00 on acct.

25th Thursday
All hands worked today. Evans worked for me today to make up back time. We made $323.37

26th Friday
All hands worked today. C. Evans worked for the Co. We made $318.5

27th Saturday
All hands worked. Evans worked for Co. half a day. We made $192.25

28th Sunday
No work today. Ashman arrived last evening. We had a dividend today. I paid Ashman $100.00 on account and sent $20.00 to Greierson.

29th Monday
All hands worked today except Ridgway. Evans worked for McCardle. We made $111.25

30th Tuesday
The dam broke this morning. We washed a little in the evening. All hands worked except Ridgway. Evans worked for McCardle.

31st Wednesday
All hands worked today except Ridgway. Evans worked half a day for McCardle. We made $118.62

Nov. 1st Thursday
All hands worked except Ridgway. Evans worked half a day for McCardle and half a day for the Co. We made $88.50

DIARY OF CAPTAIN R. P. MACE (Continued)

Nov. 2nd Friday
All hands worked except Ridgway. Evans worked for the Co. We made $156.00

3rd Saturday
We were making foot dam today and moving up the sluices. Cleaned up the lower riffles. Cunningham, Ridgway and Evans did not work today. Got $45.50

4th Sunday
We got the pump running and washed top dirt in the afternoon. Cunningham & Ridgway did not work today. Evans worked for Cogswell who went to Millerton.

5th Monday
All hands worked except Ridgway & Cogswell. Evans worked in the forenoon for Cogswell. Charley sick after noon.

6th Tuesday
No work today. All hands went to the election. Mr. & Mrs. Gilmore came over last night. We had a dividend last night of $66.00 to the share. I paid Stroud's bill of $22.00. I also paid Urquhart $20.00 on account.

7th Wednesday
This morning paid Urquhart $20.00 on acct. which I think nearly squares me with him. No work today.

8th Thursday
Pump belt broke. Hole full of water. Cunningham, Cogswell, McCardle, Duke & myself worked in afternoon.

9th Friday
Cogswell, McCardle, Duke and myself worked half a day. Cunningham worked half a day. Evans worked half a day for McCardle and half a day for Cunningham. We did not wash down. Washed top dirt all day.

10th Saturday
Cogswell, Cunningham, Duke, McCardle and myself worked all day. Evans worked all day for McCardle. We made $152.00

11th Sunday
No work today

12th Monday
All hands worked all day except Ridgway. Evans worked for McCardle. We made $101.50

Nov. 13th Tuesday
No work this forenoon. The hole full of water. All hands worked in the afternoon except Ridgway. Evans worked for McCardle. We did not wash down tonight.

14th Wednesday
All hands worked today except Ridgway. Evans worked for Bahwell today. One day & half's work $84.00

15th Thursday
All hands worked today except Ridgway. Evans worked for Farnham. We made $28.00

16th Friday
All hands worked today except Ridgway. Evans worked for Bahwell. We made $41.50

17th Saturday
All hands worked today except myself. Evans worked for me. I was putting roof on my house. We made $36.00

18th Sunday
No work today. We made a dividend today of $53.00. I paid Scott $50.00 on account.

19th Monday
All hands worked. We made $18.50

20th Tuesday
All hands worked except myself & Duke. Duke worked half a day. Charley worked for Bahwell. We did not clean up tonight.

21st Wednesday
All hands worked. Charley worked for McCardle. We made $35.50

22nd Thursday
All hands worked putting in foot dam. Charley worked for Bahwell. We had quick silver gold $37.50

23rd Friday
All hands worked building wall for head dam. Charley worked for McCardle.

24th Saturday
All hands worked putting dirt in dam. Charley worked for Bahwell.

25th Sunday
No work today. I went to the Flat.

26th Monday
All hands worked except Duke & Cogswell. Cogswell worked half a day. We finished the head dam. Charley worked for McCardle.

DIARY OF CAPTAIN R. P. MACE (Continued)

Nov. 27th Tuesday
All hands worked except Duke & Farnham. We were making platform for hose. Evans worked for Bahwell.

28th Wednesday
All hands worked except Farnham. Evans worked for McCardle.

29th Thursday
All hands worked except Farnham. Evans worked for Bahwell. Raising the head dam today.

30th Friday
All hands worked except Farnham & Evans. Evans worked half a day for McCardle.

Dec. 1st Saturday
All hands worked today except Farnham. We washed a little top dirt this afternoon.

2nd Sunday
I was getting wood today.

3rd Monday
All hands worked except Farnham.

4th Tuesday
All hands worked. We got the wheel running.

5th Wednesday
All hands worked washing top dirt.

6th Thursday
All hands worked. We made $13.00

7th Friday
All hands worked. We made $94.75

8th Saturday
All hands worked. We made $223.25
It rained hard last night. I sent Ashman $48.00 by Jas. McCardle. Dividend $49.00. Reserved one dollar myself.

9th Sunday
Pink (name of cow) came in with calf.

10th Monday
All hands worked today except McCardle. He has gone to Millerton for Scott Ashman. We made $148.00

11th Tuesday
All hands worked. Charley bought one half a share. Boss came in with calf. We made $110.00

Dec. 12th Wednesday
The dam broke last night. The hole was full of water this morning. All hands but Hatch & myself worked half a day.

13th Thursday
All hands worked half a day except McCardle. Farnham and Evans worked all day. The hole full of water.

14th Friday
All hands worked except Farnham. The crank to the pump broke last night. The hole half full of water this morning. The pump would not take all of water. Have been putting in another dam today.

15th Saturday
All hands worked except Farnham. We have been putting in a dam to take up the leakage. It is raining very hard now.

16th Sunday
Rained all day. We took out the sluices, wheel, etc. etc.

17th Monday
The water running over the dam.

18th Tuesday
I cleaned out the sluices. Obtained $35.00

END

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MADERA COUNTY HISTORIAN

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